

## Taking Action on Antibiotic Resistance

As new strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria grow, it is more important than ever

**Antibiotics  
are drugs  
used to kill  
bacteria.**  
They do  
not work  
against  
viruses.

that antibiotic drugs be prescribed in proper dosages, at the right time to fight the right illnesses.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is fighting the rising tide of antibiotic resistance. It is working with a group of health experts to develop a plan to control antibiotic resistance by:

- taking steps to ensure that antibiotics are being used with care;
- providing prescribing criteria to professionals; and
- providing information to the public.

## Where can you get more information?

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse practitioner.

Visit the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care web site at

<http://www.gov.on.ca/health/index.html>.

This pamphlet, changes to antibiotics listed on the Ontario Drug Benefits Formulary and other information about antibiotic resistance are available on the web site.

More information about stemming the tide of antibiotic resistance can also be found on the following web sites:

<http://www.ccar-ccra.org>

<http://www.antibiotics-info.org>

<http://www.infectnet.com>

*Version française disponible.*

**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**

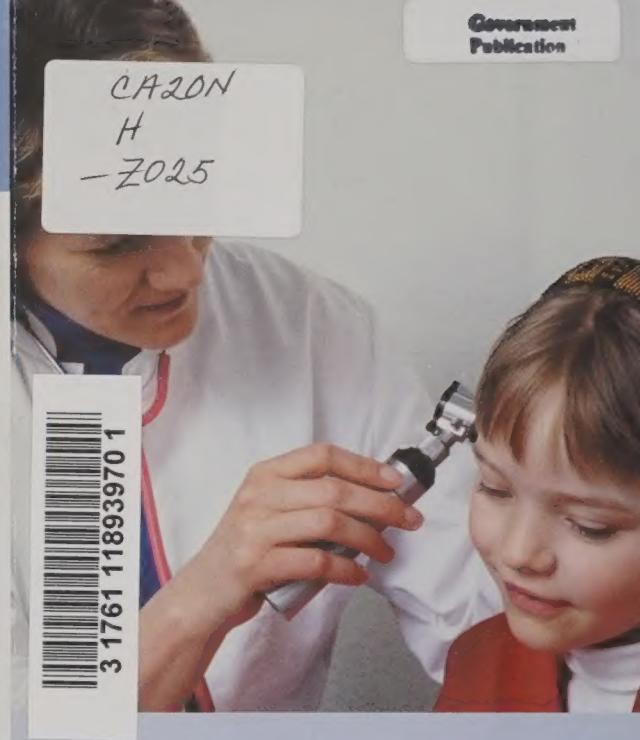
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# Antibiotic Resistance

What you  
need to know



## What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance is a serious health care problem related to the widespread use of antibiotics. Antibiotics are drugs used to kill bacteria. Medical science has successfully developed a wide range of antibiotics to fight infections caused by the many different types of bacteria.

### **Antibiotics do not work against viruses.**

Viruses cause such illnesses as the common cold, "flu" and bronchitis.

Bacteria can change over time and become "resistant" to antibiotics, so antibiotics cannot kill them. Using antibiotics too often or incorrectly can lead to more

resistant bacteria. This is a serious public health concern, since we rely on antibiotic treatments to fight illnesses.

*Bacteria can change and become "resistant" to antibiotics*

"Superbugs" are new bacteria that are resistant to most antibiotics we have today.

Resistant bacteria also can spread from one person to another. That is why it is important to use antibiotics only when they are really needed.

Remember; it is the bacteria that are resistant—not you!

## What can you do to avoid increasing antibiotic resistance?

- Talk to your doctor when he or she prescribes an antibiotic to remedy an ailment.
- Don't ask for antibiotics if your doctor says you have a viral infection (common cold, "flu," bronchitis, etc.).  
Antibiotics don't work on viruses.
- Follow all instructions provided by your doctor or pharmacist.



- Always complete the full prescription. **Do not** save part of it to use another time.
- Never use antibiotics prescribed for someone else.
- Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of infections. Most common infections are spread by hands. When you wash your hands, use soap and water. Remember; washing with water alone will not get rid of germs.
- Whether you are young or old, your own natural defenses can sometimes fail, and you may need antibiotics. They won't decrease your natural immunity to infections. It may be necessary to take antibiotics.